



Puget Sound Blood Center
research | medicine | blood & tissue services

BUSINESS PROFILE

Company Name:

Puget Sound Blood Center

Headquarters:

Seattle, Washington (USA)

Industry: *Healthcare*

Employees: *Approximately 800*

Business Environment:

- *Founded in 1944, nonprofit Puget Sound Blood Center evolved from a community blood bank to an internationally recognized leader in transfusion medicine*
- *Provides one of the few centralized transfusion service labs in the nation*
- *Manages the blood supply and provides compatibility testing and preparation for more than 70 hospitals and clinics in the Western Washington region*
- *Operates the world's largest transfusion service in addition to providing blood and tissue banking services, medical research, and education*

Implementation Team:

MIMIX® Services by Lakeview

MIMIX Products:

MIMIX® ha1™

“ *There’s zero tolerance for downtime here—our computers help save lives and support critical medical research. MIMIX ha1 helps us provide 24/7/365 system availability.* ”

– **Peggy Dunn, Director of Information Technology, Puget Sound Blood Center**

Critical Issue

The Puget Sound Blood Center serves patients with bleeding disorders, burns, cancer, diabetes, hemophilia, surgical needs and traumatic injuries who depend on transfusion and require bone and tissue transplants. It also supports vital medical research of scientists around the world. Its systems must be available 24/7 to enable hundreds of medical and research employees to provide critical healthcare services.

Results

- Reduced planned downtime by nearly 90 percent to just minutes every three months.
- Supports compliance with HIPAA requirements for disaster recovery for critical applications.
- Reduced IT staff required for switches from as many as six to just one, freeing team members to perform other tasks and reducing overtime costs.
- Enabled 24/7 access to essential blood and tissue services and payroll/billing applications.
- Confidence in switch and backup capabilities across a user base with no tolerance for downtime.

Technologies

- MIMIX® ha1™
- Two IBM® System i™ 520 servers, production in Seattle, and remote backup in nearby Renton, Washington
- Blood Bank Control System (BBCS) from Blood Bank Computer Systems, Inc.
- Accounting and payroll software from Unicorn Software, Ltd.

Business Challenge

In some business environments, the phrase “hey, we’re not saving lives here,” is used to help a team focus on practical reality and stay on mission. For the staff of the Puget Sound Blood Center, however, the situation is different: they really are doing life-saving work.

For sixty years, the Blood Center has been serving its Washington region and helping remote areas including Alaska and Hawaii meet healthcare needs. By managing a safe and stable blood supply, providing tissue and bone marrow, and discovering new medical treatments, the staff of Puget Sound Blood Center is focused on preserving and enhancing the quality of life.

Blood Center staff and researchers must have continuous access to the Blood Bank Control System, the records of the Northwest Tissue Center, and other vital data and applications. There is no tolerance for downtime on these critical systems. If a patient were hemorrhaging, a life could be in danger if the Blood Center’s computers were down. Unplanned outages are unacceptable and planned downtime must be kept to a strict minimum.



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Solution

Puget Sound Blood Center successfully installed MIMIX® ha1™ in 1990 to ensure the continuous availability of its critical data and applications.

“Maintaining systems availability is an absolute IT priority here,” said Peggy Dunn, Director of Information Technology, Puget Sound Blood Center. “Puget Sound Blood Center is the largest transfusion service lab in the U.S., and we’re independent organizationally. But the information and applications on our System i are not just vital to us—they have critical importance to patients, caregivers and hospitals across our region and to medical science worldwide,” noted Dunn.

Planned downtime has been reduced to about 12 minutes every quarter because the Blood Center can now switch to a backup server on demand. “The quarterly switch is our only planned downtime. It used to take multiple employees 45 minutes to an hour to do this manually, not counting the time to get the users off the system. With MIMIX, the switch takes less than 15 minutes,” said Dee Clemence, Technical Support Analyst, Puget Sound Blood Center.

“Some users had very strong objections to switching, but MIMIX is also helping us build trust. We stay on the backup box a week after each switch, and that goes very smoothly. The users know it will come back and it will be correct once they get switched over,” noted Clemence.

MIMIX is easy to use, according to Clemence. “My operations people check it every morning, and if there is any issue, usually they can resolve it themselves. Device descriptions are key to what we do. It used to drive the users nuts if their printers didn’t work, and then the help desk would go crazy trying to solve it. MIMIX has made our lives easier by helping to ensure that those devices will be there when we switch,” explained Clemence.

When help is needed, the Blood Center team relies on Lakeview solution services. “Lakeview is excellent. Once I had to call them on a weekend. I hated to do that, but I was in a bind. They called back within 10 minutes and straightened things out—then, later in the week, they gave me preventive steps to avoid the problem in the future,” Clemence noted.

Dunn also praised Lakeview’s MIMIX Services. “Lakeview has staff who have been there a long time and really understand our environment. We re-wrote our procedure for the switchover a few years ago, and the Lakeview team reviewed it and provided very helpful input.”

“Overall, MIMIX has really streamlined our operations and freed up our staff to do other things. There’s a cost savings in terms of staff time and overtime hours, and it’s really gratifying that the end users have confidence in switching now,” said Dunn.



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